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48

SPEECHES
OF
HON. SAM HOUSTON, OF TEXAS,
ON THE
PACIFIC RAILROAD BILL:
AND IN REPLY TO
HON. A. IVERSON, OF GEORGIA.

DELIVERED IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES, JANUARY 12 & 13, 1859.

The Senate having under consideration the Pacific Railroad bill—Mr. HOUSTON said:

Mr. PRESIDENT: It was not originally my intention to address to the Senate any remarks on this subject, but it seems to me that the proposition now submitted to us is one of great importance. If I have correctly apprehended the design of the Pacific railroad, it is for the national advantage, for the general benefit, and it ought not to be confined to any particular section or interest in the United States. If so, I cannot perceive the propriety of restricting the engineers in their reconnoissances to any particular locality, but we should leave the wide field open for the selection of that line which will best promote our great national purposes. This amendment, however, proposes to limit the selection to a point north of the thirty-seventh parallel. It seems to me that if nature has designed a communication between the Mississippi river and the Pacific ocean, the least expensive, the most direct, the most facile means of communication, is to be found in a route commencing at the mouth of the Red river. By commencing there, all the streams which would be encountered, if you commenced at Memphis, or any point further north, will be avoided, and there is but one stream of importance between that and the Rio Grande. It is a natural trough, if you will permit the expression, extending from that point, with but very little interruption, to El Paso. That country has been described by Captain Marcy, and others, who have taken reconnoissances of it, and it is manifest that a road can be constructed there with less expense than on any other route which has been designated or thought of.

We have heard of sandy deserts there interposing insurperable obstacles. Is there any route suggested that interposes no obstacles to the accomplishment of the work? None that I have heard of. It is remarkably singular that the obstacle which is regarded as insuperable, this dreary, sandy desert, this Arabian waste, as it has been termed, in which steam-cars and caravans are to be overwhelmed, is not actually known on that route at all. We have now a regular mail communication between El Paso and the Pacific ocean. If there were no facilities for a railroad on that route,

how is it possible that mail-coaches could run regularly over without impediment? That fact affords a practical refutation of this assumption, which is unfounded in fact.

Why need this interpose an objection so as to rule out from the general provisions of this bill a section of country that possesses equal, if not greater advantages than any other for this work? By the route which I have suggested you are afforded through the Mississippi river, from the point where the Red river empties into it, egress to the Atlantic and the Gulf. From that point, too, you can communicate with the South when you cannot from St. Louis, because the ice-bound condition of the Mississippi at that point precludes navigation, and you are totally dependent on transportation by cars from St. Louis. The mouth of the Red river is never obstructed by ice, nor does it ever offer any obstruction at any point on the Mississippi below the mouth of the Ohio river. From the mouth of the Ohio you can communicate with the North and East; and from Memphis and Vicksburg with the whole South. At the terminus of this route, you have all the facilities of water transportation which, in point of cheapness, very far surpasses railroad transportation. But, sir, if you terminate the road at St. Louis, where the river is ice-bound at this season of the year, and where commerce must of necessity be arrested, how will the people of the Gulf or of the lower part of the Mississippi have communication with it? Must you transport articles to some point south of the Ohio river, and thence radiate through the whole southern country? Is that the way? Sir, you have the opportunity of accommodating all by locating the terminus at the mouth of the Red river, and there the whole commercial world is open to you; all the facilities that arise from railroad and water transportation are afforded to every section of the country north of it; but if you bring the road to St. Louis, you must be solely dependent upon railroad transportation, and you cannot have it by water, because the Mississippi is ice-bound as well as the Missouri, and you are arrested there. All the cheapness, all the conveniences, and everything that would result from the other terminus is there converted into a coast and an impediment to transportation.

I think that to restrict the southern limit to the thirty-seventh, or even to the thirty-fourth parallel, is ruling out one of the most important routes, the advantages of which to the South will be incalculably greater than any other. By leaving a margin for including that route, do we cut off the North from any portion of the advantages which it has right to claim? None at all. The Ohio and the Mississippi are open to Cairo; and at Cairo, at Memphis, and at Vicksburg, the line of which I have spoken will connect with the whole eastern portion of the country. The entire line north will be reached from Cairo; from Memphis this line will communicate with Charleston, with Richmond, and with all the southern portion of the Union. Either from Vicksburg or from Memphis, you can convey to New Orleans, by ship or steamboat transportation, all the materials that will arrive from the Pacific coast. If you have anything to transport there, you have all the advantages of embarking them at a point more accessible than the mouth of the Ohio for the people of the North. They have no streams to ascend; but the people of the South have the broad and secure Mississippi, with no impediments, no sawyers, no obstructions, to prevent their reaching the terminus with perfect convenience and security. You cannot have access to the North from any other point with the same facilities that you can from this terminus on the Mississippi.

Why rule out this route? Is it not entitled to consideration? Why not give entire latitude to those who are to construct the road, to make their selection? If it is not eligible to make the terminus I have suggested, very well; let them so decide; but I implore you not to disfranchise those who have a right to your consideration as a part of this Union. If this is to be a great national work, give it a national character, and treat it as a national measure for the defence of the Pacific coast. I have always been its advocate. I have seen no constitutional impediment to it. There is none; or else it is unconstitutional to give national defence. The Federal Government is bound to defend the several States, and to give security to them. If they owe it allegiance and loyalty, the Federal Government owes them protection. Can you give protection to California without a direct communication with the Pacific ocean? You cannot. Can you bind them in interest? Can you make them identical with us? Can you bind them in cordiality, in sympathy, and in loyalty, unless you create a bond of this kind? You cannot. I wish no portion of this country to be alien to the Union, and I wish to do justice to all. I never could conceive that there was a constitutional impediment in the way of this work. Are we authorized to build forts and fortifications? If we are, are we not equally bound to afford other means of defence? Is not the communication with San Francisco and with the Pacific as important as it is to erect forts here upon our borders, on the Atlantic? Equally important. They are necessary to the protection of our Atlantic coast, and a railroad is indispensable to the protection of the Pacific coast.

I have always been a stickler for strict construction, and I am yet; but I believe whatever is necessary for the salvation of the country is constitutional. There has been no constitutional provision to bring these vast territories into the United States, and to incorporate them into our Union. The Constitution cannot be stretched; it is not a piece of India-rubber; it is a compacted whole, and not to be distended; but whenever you step beyond the Constitution to acquire a dominion, it becomes expedient that you should do something with that dominion; and then it becomes a matter of legislative discretion. That is my opinion about the Constitution and its application to those territories that have been acquired without its pale and without its provisions. I insist that it would be an act of glaring injustice to this section of the country, possessing the vast and illimitable advantages which it does as a terminus of a road, to exclude it from the common benefits that are extended to other sections of the Union.

Mr. President, as I remarked in the outset, it was not my intention to have uttered one syllable upon this occasion. I have always entertained my private views and opinions. I did not know that they were more orthodox than those of other gentlemen, nor did I wish to bring them in opposition to their views. It is possible that I might be reconciled to the views which they have advanced; but they have not yet convinced me, and I have a right to give my opinion.

I have regretted, Mr. President, that in the course of this discussion it has been deemed necessary to draw any invidious distinctions between the North and the South. That to me for the last twelve or fourteen years has been a subject of deep and inexpressible regret. I have never heard that chord struck, but its vibration was painful to me; and the other day, when gentlemen thought proper to advert to it, and when there was crimination and recrimination, I was deeply wounded. I had hoped that that subject was deeply buried, that it never would be resurrected again, at least within

my hearing for the short period during which I am to occupy a seat on this floor. That good fortune, however, was not allotted to me. I had to hear the jarring sounds again, not of the death knell, but of agitation; and what its ultimate consequence is to be, I know not; I hope never the severance of this Union. I hope, I believe, the Union is to be eternal. I cannot but think that if the bright capacity, the cultivated intellect, and the undoubted patriotism of gentlemen here could be subsidized to the great object of devising ways and means for the perpetuation of the Union, for harmonizing the discordant sentiments that exist in the community, and reconciling difficulties, it would be a most desirable and commendable employment. It would seem, however, that they were rather devising causes and occasions of disagreement and alienation between the North and the South. Disunion has become a cant phrase. It is talked of familiarly. In olden times, and it is within my recollection, when it was first sounded in the House of Representatives, when it was first suggested in the debate on the tariff of 1824, I thought it was treason, and that the individual ought to have been crucified. It is no more acceptable to me now than it was then. It is more familiar, but that does not commend it either to my affection or to my judgment. Disunion, sir! You might as well tell me that you could have a healthy patient and a whole mat, if you were to cut the main artery of his life.

Have gentlemen ever reflected as to when, where, and how they are to begin disunion; and where it is to end? Will they cut the great Mississippi in two? Who is to have the mouth of it? Who is to command its source? Will it be those who agitate the subject, or are ultra upon it? Never, never! Look at the great West, rising like a giant. Think you they will be prohibited the privilege of commanding the great outlet of that river, when their productions are boundless and float upon its bosom every year, and every day of every year? Sir, it is madness. I must remark to my honorable friend from Georgia, (Mr. IVERSON,) with all kindness of feeling personally, that when I heard him speak for the South, I could not but review scenes that passed before me in the old Chamber, when gentlemen rose and spoke for the South as if they were proxies of the South, and held the South in the hollow of their hands, or controlled its destinies by their will. Sir, I am of the South. I was born there. I have lived there. No other man in the whole South has a broader interest in it than myself; my all is there, and I have represented a proud State here. I answer for a part of the South. I intend to disclaim the right of any gentleman on this floor to speak for the South, when I can offer a negation to his assertions.

This must be stopped, sir. It may wear out. If it does not, and the crisis comes, you will find the patriotic hearts of the South, are better employed than in agitating this subject; men who are better engaged in the daily avocations of life; men whose employments lead them to love their country, to hope for its advancement, to rely in security that on their own exertions depend the welfare and prosperity of their families; and whose prayers are for harmony and the well-being and prosperity of their children in life. These are the bone and sinew of that country. They have no passions to flatter; they have no political aspirations; they cherish nothing but a holy loyalty for their country and its Constitution; and when these men are called to action, and look around upon the elements which they are to oppose, it will be as wise, if we were possible, for a sane man to throw himself in the way of the furious tornado, as for public men

to oppose them. They will not do it. They will stand aloof, hugging security with a consciousness of happiness and the future well-being of the human race. They will be contented with the blessings they enjoy, and will not put them to the hazards of revolution.

The gentleman spoke of one State seceding, and others following. Mr. President, it would be much easier for one State to come back than it would be for other States to go with it. I can see no propriety in that. What would they do? Suppose one State goes out; it rules itself out of the Union; it has cut off all intercourse with the other States; and as to talking of a division of the great public lands of the United States, the right of a State to any participation in them is at an end when she secedes from the Union. She has left good company and gone off by herself; she is in a minority; she cannot take any portion of the territory, for she has abjured that; she has surrendered it by going out of the Union, for it is only through the Union that she has an interest in it. Where would be the navy of the seceders? where their army? where their security at home? Sir, the very moment that a State places herself out of the Union, that moment she assumes the attitude of revolution; she has revolted. Certain duties are enjoined on her by the Constitution; if she resists the operation of the Constitution, she becomes a rebel *per se*.

Sir, let the wise men of this Union turn their heads and their hearts towards peace and harmony; let them become reconciled one to another, and continue not the use of crimination and recrimination, but the language of conciliation, of courtesy, of considerate demeanor, reflecting but not talking, thinking but not acting prematurely, and then we shall see a harmonious and desirable state of things in this country. We shall see no animosity; we shall see here no bitterness; no incendiary pamphlets will be circulated in either section. Let gentlemen of the North cease to agitate the subject of our southern institutions. They are ours, they were theirs, and they had a right to them, and can reëstablish them again if they choose. If it is a matter of policy with them to eschew them, it is a matter of necessity and of right and of interest on the part of the South to maintain them. Gentlemen may talk of philanthropy and humanity and the equality of all men under the Declaration of Independence; but I do not think an African equally white with me, and therefore he is not on a footing of equality exactly. He has never enjoyed political rights, and therefore he has been deprived of none. In Africa, he enjoyed the privilege of slaughtering and eating his fellow-man; and it was consistent with his idolatry, and consistent with his education; but that does not give him the education and moral pitch that white men have.

But be that as it may, whilst these subjects are being discussed, I ask, I implore gentlemen to tell us what better disposition can be made of them. Is the wild and savage African of Africa better than the slave of the South? Is he as well off as the free blacks of the North or those who are freezing in Canada? No; he is not as well off as they are; he is not cared for; and will you throw our slaves back again into barbarism, or will you turn them loose upon us in the South? Have we done aught to produce the necessity of having them amongst us? Did not your ancestors do it? We never were a commercial people; we never carried on the slave-trade until recently—and I brand that as an act of unmitigated infamy; but it was done by others. Slavery has descended to us; it is necessary, and we must maintain it; but does it conflict with the well-being of northern gentlemen and northern society that the South bear it? We are told that it is a ca-

lamity and misfortune to us. Let us bear our misfortunes alone. We have not asked for intervention, nor can we permit it. It is requiring too much. Have I ever sought to drive slavery into your communities? Have I ever sought to extend its limits or to trench on any one of the established principles of gentlemen who think differently on this subject from myself? I have not sought to thrust it down their throats; but I have determined always to maintain it as a man, and to vindicate the rights that exist with us.

You never hear me talk of "southern rights." The South has no rights but what belong to the North; nor has the North any rights but what belong to the South. The North has excluded slavery; the South retains it. The North did it because exclusion was their interest; the South retain it because that is their interest. All the States have equal rights. You, gentlemen of the North, have the right to adopt slavery when you please. We have the right to abolish it when we please. You have the right to abolish it, and we to adopt it. Our rights are reciprocal under the Constitution. We hold no rights that are southern that are not northern; but "southern rights" is a cant phrase, calculated to inflame the popular mind, and create an alienation of feeling, as though the South was, in interest, antagonistic to the North, and the North to the South. Allay these reflections, gentleman; hush them up; cure and heal the wounds that have been inflicted upon the nation; give harmony to it, and you will give stability to our institutions. God has given us everything that is necessary to make us a happy, a great, and a mighty nation; and, oh, let us not be laggard in the generous race of emulation to honor His works.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 13, 1859.

Mr. IVERSON having replied to the foregoing remarks, Mr. Houston rejoined as follows:

Mr. PRESIDENT: If it had not been for the lateness of the hour last evening, at which the honorable Senator from Georgia [Mr. IVERSON] concluded his remarks, I should then have taxed the Senate for a short time; but as the usual hour had arrived for our adjournment, I thought it proper to defer what I had to say until this morning. Before proceeding to notice the remarks of the honorable Senator, I desire to afford him an opportunity of giving a more explicit explanation to one expression which he used in relation to myself. When he referred to the course which I had pursued in the Senate on former occasions, he spoke of my "antecedents." If the gentleman will be so kind as to explain to me the full scope of that observation, I shall be better enabled to compass my view of the subject. I should be glad if the Senator would think proper to explain what he meant by my "antecedents," as he twice used that term in the course of his remarks.

Mr. IVERSON. Well, sir, I meant simply this; as far as my observation of the Senator's political course had gone—and it covered a number of years—I understood him upon all occasions, in season and out of season, to be crying hosannas to the Union; and I meant, in connection with that, the remark which I made, that when, in the face of the northern aggression, in the face of the rapid and powerful march of the spirit of

abolitionism in the northern States, and the dangers to which the institutions of the South were subjected by it, I heard a southern man constantly singing praises to the Union, and denouncing everybody who should call it in question under any circumstances, I suspected that he was endeavoring to make himself a popular man in the North, for the purpose of reaching high political position.

Mr. HOUSTON. Mr. President, the honorable Senator need not repeat the whole of his exposition of that particular remark of his, for he has heretofore been very explicit; and I intend, in the course of my observations, to advert to that particular part of his speech. He has not instanced any particular occasion to which he intended to apply the term "antecedents;" no vote, no action of mine, by which I have gone out of the way for the purpose of lauding the Union, or condemning any gentlemen who had thought contrary to me on that subject. I have combated opinions that I thought heretical, and I am always ready to combat them—whether they be in accordance with northern or southern views; but not for the purpose of making personal assaults or reflections on gentlemen. If my antecedents are looked out, it will be found that they have been entirely consistent. I know to what the gentleman must necessarily have referred, as he made the remark in connection with his allusion to the recent defeats which I have sustained. The reference must have been to my vote for the organization of Oregon, my vote for the admission of California, and my vote in opposition to the Kansas-Nebraska bill. All these votes were in strict accordance with the instructions that I derived from my own State, and under the Constitution of the Union and the Democratic measures of this Government; so that in them I am sustained. But if my advocacy of the Union has caused my immolation, politically, as the Senator says, I exult and triumph in that as the most glorious antecedent of my existence; one that I hail with pride and consolation as an American; because I have always looked to the Union as the sheet-anchor of our safety and our national grandeur and prosperity. If for that I have been stricken down, I rejoice at it; I shall consider myself a blessed martyr; and I should endure that martyrdom a thousand times were the alternative submitted to me of office or abandonment of the Union.

But, sir, the Senator suspects that I or any southern man who advocates and sings peans to the Union is in pursuit of the Presidency. I can assure the honorable gentleman that it is the last thing in this world that I would accept, if it were tendered to me; and for his satisfaction, and that he may not hereafter anticipate any rivalry on my part, in any aspirations that he may have, I withdraw myself from all competition by the assurance, that if every political party of this Union were to tender to me this day the nomination for President, I would respectfully decline it. I have higher, nobler, tenderer duties to perform. I have to create a resting-place for those who are dear to me as the people of this Union, and who form part of them. These are the duties I have to perform. If there is aught of public service that remains to me unfinished, I am not apprised of it. My life has been meted out to sixty-five years; and forty-five years of that life devoted to my country's service, almost continuously, should entitle me to an honorable discharge. I claim that discharge from my country. I claim that, having performed every duty which devolved upon me with fidelity, I ought to be permitted to retire from this Chamber in accordance with my heartfelt desires, with a constitution, thank God, not much impaired, and with clean hands and a clean conscience, to the retirement

where duties are demanded of me as a father. So, the defeat of which he speaks was no disappointment; and, by way of explanation, that the gentleman may be more perfectly satisfied with my position, I will say, that had my lamented and honorable colleague, General Rusk, remained with us, by the providence of God, on the 4th of March last I should have vacated my seat and retired to the walks of private life. A man who has combated so many difficulties as myself, who has been engaged in constant commotion, in turbulence, and in scenes of upheaving difficulties, should seek a respite at the close of his life, if his span should be meted out a few years, to create a homestead for his family, and a place of rest for himself. So, sir, I hope the gentleman, on this point, will be perfectly satisfied that I have no aspirations ungratified; I have no expectations, as a recompense, to look for, for my devotion to the Union. It is an inherent principle in me; I gave evidences of it many years ago. I have periled every thing for that and for the protection of the frontier of the honorable gentleman's State, in early life, when disunion was a word not known in the vocabulary of politics in America. That was an evidence that I gave then, of devotion to the Union; and I need not point to the spot in the South which I watered with my blood to defend this Union. What I have done since, I care not to recount; but I know that, without reference to the Presidency of the United States, I was engaged in struggles that tended to the perpetuation of this Union, as I believe, though I was then in a separate community of men. We gave national existence to Texas, that she might become a part of this great Confederacy. I there gave renewed evidence of my devotion to the Union, and to the institutions of the United States. Sir, there a spark flashed upon the world, the consequence of which has created a revolution that is still onward, and will continue to affect this whole globe. Until time shall merge in the ocean of eternity, its effects will not be arrested. It has opened a world, and we came forward and were incorporated into this Union. It was not a small territory; it was an empire and a Republic of itself, which had passed through every crucible of trial and of difficulty that would test men's souls and try their nerves. This was not to secure the Presidency of the United States; nor did it look very possible then that aspirations of that kind influenced me or any other Texan. Certainly it is not so plausible as to suppose that, by contriving the separation of these States, the honorable gentleman might have aspirations to gratify, which, it might be presumed, could not be so well compassed in the Union, considering the intractable character of the northern people. Their affinities might not be such as to be commanded readily in advancing the gentleman to the Presidency, and he might think it expedient to have a dissolution of the Union, and a new confederacy formed, in order that he might turn a jack and secure the game to himself. [Laughter.]

Sir, I trust I have always had higher and holier aspirations than those connected with self. If my ambition were not inordinate, it ought to be gratified and fully satisfied with the number of positions that I have filled, as responsible and important, relatively, as that of the Presidency of the United States; surrounded by difficulties, overwhelmed by menacing millions, without a friend to succor or sustain us. Sir, I have had to wade through difficulties and through scenes of anguish and peril with a gallant people—none have ever been tested to the same extent—without resources, new, unhoused, surrounded by all the inconveniences and peril of a wilderness, surrounded by savage tribes, with the feelings of nations alien to us.

Sir, we have had these perils to pass through; and loyal to one section of the country, I was loyal to all. When Texas was annexed to the United States, it was not to the southern confederacy, nor in anticipation of one; she was annexed to the Union; and as a Union man, I have ever maintained my position, and ever shall. I wish no prouder epitaph to mark the board or slab that may lie on my tomb than this: "He loved his country; he was a patriot; he was devoted to the Union." If it is for this that I have suffered martyrdom, it is sufficient that I stand at quits with those who have wielded the sacrificial knife.

But, sir, it has not estranged me from the people I represent. The gentleman says I have no right to represent them on this floor; that I have been repudiated. That forms a justification for him, I suppose, when speaking of the entire South, to embrace the little section of Texas and represent that too, while he excludes the actual representative from any participation in the duties of his section. I admit the great ability of the gentleman, and his entire competence for the task. He speaks of the whole South as familiarly as if he were speaking for it; and, in contradistinction to the whole South, he speaks of Georgia as "my own State." Well, sir, that may be all right; Georgia may have but one man in it for aught I know. [Laughter.] I have not been there for two years; but it did seem to me, having heard of distinguished personages there, some that have occasionally illumined the Senate by the coruscations of their genius and their profound ability, that really Georgia had some other representatives on this floor and in the other House than the honorable Senator himself.

Can the gentleman suppose that any little man, as he would think it to be, in not re-elevating me to a situation in this body, would inflict the slightest mortification on me? Not at all. I do not believe that it was intended in the act to compliment me, by any means. I believe it was designed to pretermitt and to rebuke me; and the means to do it were afforded, because the persons who were then in power and controlled the presses and political influences in the State had been pampered, and nourished, and cherished by the means which my late colleague, General Rusk, and myself, procured for the State, the \$5,000,000 granted by Congress, of which there remains to-day not one bit of gold dust in the treasury of Texas. We gave them the means of controlling the political condition of that State, thinking we had placed men in power who had claims upon its confidence and respect. Whether it was a wayward fit, or whether it was a considered thing, I care not. It afforded me an opportunity of retiring to the situation that I desire; and it has not alienated my affections in the slightest from the people of Texas. They have no honors to confer that I would accept; still they are the people that I need not say I love. I cherish them, and their interests is to me a dear interest, because with their destiny my posterity are identified.

These are the reasons that control me, Mr. President, and they shall ever control me. Those men had no power to inflict mortification on me, and their act was exceedingly grateful to me because it solved a problem which had never been solved before. It had been insisted upon that Texas could not get along without my services; but they have demonstrated to me that they can get along without my services, and I am exceedingly glad of it, because it shows their increasing prosperity. [Laughter.] But, sir, whilst the constitutional term which remains unexhausted to me shall endure, I will continue faithfully to discharge my trust to them, and I have made a gain if they should perchance have made a loss, and I will avail myself of

that advantage without leaving the Senate with a single regret, or, I hope, a harsh or ungentle feeling towards one gentleman within the scope of my view. I would not cherish a wish of unkindness to the honorable Senator from Georgia; and if truthfully he can reconcile the course which he has adopted to himself, he will meet with no rebuke from me. But rebuke and vindication are different things.

It is possible that I may be able to extend courtesy to the gentleman in my seclusion or retirement at home, in my humble way of life—for none of the blandishments of wealth or elegance have ever surrounded me in life. Hardy and rugged in my nature, both physically and intellectually, I have always been ready to meet and combat the inconveniences of life. I have known how to abound, and I have known how to want. I have known what it is to feel exultation, and I have realized abasement. Whatever Providence has allotted me, that I have learned to be contented with, so long as my honor is untarnished. The honorable gentleman may find it, ere a single year runs out, convenient in an excursion to Texas, after some political events have taken place in Georgia, to call and spend a social time with me, realizing that fortune is a capricious jade, and that politics are “mighty unsartin.” [Laughter.] Should the gentleman come, I promise him the bread of peace, the reception of welcome; but still he cannot indoctrinate me with the principles of disunion. That I announce. That is a subject that shall be ruled out of our social intercourse, while it meets my unqualified condemnation without attaching it to the gentleman himself. [Applause in the galleries.]

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Order!

Mr. HOUSTON. I take the Globe, and expect to have them all filed away, and I may occasionally try to refresh my reminiscences, and regale myself by adverting to some scenes that have been exciting in the Senate of the United States, and throughout the nation. I shall hope that they are things that have been, but are not; for no sound will be so delightful to me in retirement as to hear that the Union is more closely bound together every day, cemented by affection and reciprocal kind offices; and that that crimination and recrimination which has existed heretofore, has died away; that all agitation has subsided, and is forgotten; that like one great family in a grand migration to a happier condition of national existence, we are marching hand in hand, and that our people feel one common cause, one common home, one common fraternity throughout the broad Union.

But, Mr. President, notwithstanding the gentleman's characteristic amenity and politeness, his great amiability of disposition, and his bland kindness of demeanor, I am satisfied that, when he gave utterance to these sentiments, he could not have been in earnest, and that they were merely an ebullition of the moment—nothing more. He says:

“The Senator talks about the Union and sings hosannas in its praise. I have heard those songs sung before; and I must say that I have never heard them sung by a southern man without suspecting at once that his eye was upon the Presidency of the United States.”

Sir, that would argue, if I were disposed to be suspicious—but I am very unsuspecting in my nature—that the gentleman who is ready to draw deductions from the conduct of others, was always looking at that prize himself, and that on the least indication, as he believed, of a similar feeling in others, he was ready to detect it and set it down to their account rather as an offence than as a commendable quality. Again:

"It may require a great deal of charity, looking at the antecedents of that Senator, and the remarks he has made here to-day, to suppose, although his political life is about to end, that he has not lost sight of that long and lingering hope of his—the great folly of his life."

Now, sir, I might call on the gentleman for some evidence of that, but I will not do it. I do not believe it is tangible, and I do not wish to occupy time unnecessarily; but, really, I have never endeavored to chalk out a course of policy in my life, with reference to the Presidency, that seemed half so significant as to promise the dissolution of the Union and the formation of a southern republic; for that clearly indicates ulterior views on the part of the Senator, with a mind that was suspicious—not with me! Again:

"Sir it is this very intensity of feeling which the Senator from Texas has so long exhibited for the Union, over and at the sacrifice of the interests of his own section, that the people of his State have decided to put him in retirement; and, for one, I cannot but rejoice at that decision."

I should like to know what sacrifice of the interests of my country I have ever caused. Was it for sacrificing my country that I was immolated? or that I was permitted is a better expression, for I consider it no sacrifice without some loss of life; and I am not hurt. [Laughter.] The cry was, "abolition, and the three thousand preachers," because I advocated their right of petition to the Senate of the United States. These were the charges made against me: opposition to the Nebraska bill, voting against the repeal of the Missouri compromise. I am satisfied that it was done, not altogether regardless of the circumstances that then existed, for it was known that about the time the Nebraska bill was introduced, when it was not contemplated to repeal the Missouri compromise, in Providence, Rhode Island, I made a solemn declaration that I would vote against the bill, and resist it while I lived. Then the alternative was suggested, "let us bring in the repeal of the Missouri compromise, and Houston is either bound to retract what he has avowed publicly, or to vote against the repeal of the Missouri compromise, and that will put him down, by raising the cry of abolition against him. He will have to vote with gentlemen who are ultra in the North, and that will put him down, by identifying him with them. Besides, the Administration of the Government, with all its patronage, with all the newspaper press, and with the cry of Democracy, shall overwhelm this man, and he is no longer an obstacle; and if we have suspected he had his eye on the Presidency, this will kill him at home, and then he will be killed abroad." There is a consolation in that part of it, and I am much obliged to them for it.

I do not interfere with politics out of the House or in the House, any more than I can help; but I see that it is complained that the northern Democracy is routed and broken down. I announced in the discussion of the Nebraska bill, that if you dared to repeal the Missouri compromise, it would be giving the adversaries of the Democracy in the North a weapon with which they would discomfit and beat them down; that it was not sustaining the northern Democracy; that it was literally butchering them. Has it not been so? And what has the South gained by it? The result is that within a brief space of time, two States that would have been Indian territory, will be added to the North. It has placed Missouri in such a situation that she must of necessity yield to the surrounding influences, and add another State to the North. I shall not enlarge upon this; but that is what the South gained. I forewarned them of the impending evil,

and for that I was stricken down, so far as political influences could be brought to bear, I was pretermitted; and these were the offences that I had committed. But the southern vision is becoming clear; the beam is being taken out of their natural eyes, and they are beginning to comprehend fully the extent of the benefits flowing from that kind of dispensation. I opposed that repeal. I could not agree with gentlemen who advocated the measure of repealing the Missouri compromise, sanctified by so many Democratic associations, by the approval of Monroe and his Cabinet, of Jackson, of Polk, and of all the illustrious men; approved by all; rejected by none; not even a mooted question in the community. Its repeal was concocted here, and from here it was radiated throughout the country with the *eclat* of a Democratic Administration, as a Democratic measure.

But did that sanctify that curse to the South? No, sir; it could not convert it into a blessing; that was impossible. If some gentleman of the North, who is considered ultra in politics—the gentleman from Massachusetts, or from New York, or from Ohio—had introduced a provision to repeal the Missouri compromise, what reception would the proposition have met in the South? There was not a man in the whole South who would not have grasped his weapon of war and rushed to the scene of combat, and been willing to have fallen upon that line in vindication of southern rights. Well, sir, did it sanctify it as a measure of blessing to the South, that it was introduced not by a southern man, but by a northern man with southern principles? When he introduced it, it was adopted by the South and by both the existing political parties which had but a few years before solemnly abjured the reagitation of the slavery question, in their political conventions. Their solemn pledge was disregarded; the torch was applied to the magazines of agitation; and what has been the condition of the country from that moment to this, but agitation unnecessarily produced, for political ends and to manufacture Presidents? That was all of it, and the South is yet the sufferer; and I pray God that deeper calamities may not fall upon her. That measure is the initiative of misfortune to the South.

These may have been my antecedents; but they are such as I am proud of; and I only regret I did not triumph and enforce them with ability sufficient to have produced a trembling in this Chamber, to make gentlemen weak in the knees who resisted the conviction that flashed upon every mind.

I am sure I need not dwell upon this subject; but I will make a further remark to the honorable gentleman, who on a former occasion classed me as a party to myself. From that I rather derived some consolation, because I knew that according to my estimate, I could not have been in bad company if I were by myself, [laughter,] and that no difficulty could arise between myself and my companions. [Renewed laughter.] We should harmonize perfectly. I see discord in other political parties; I see a great want of harmony; I see “hards” and “softs,” politically in the same party, not exactly harmonizing; some going a little too far, some not going far enough; some going one road, and some another; some rather kind to banks, and others a little friendly to internal improvements, beyond the standard that General Jackson fixed.

I am a Union man. The great champion of the Union was Andrew Jackson. To him descended from the fathers of the Republic, in a direct line, the principles upon which he stood; and his declaration, “the Union: it must and shall be preserved,” will never be forgotten. Sir, that will tingle in the ears of patriots for ages to come. All the combinations of

aspirants or political demagogues cannot defeat the great object and aim of our forefathers, and of the men who rise in the vista between them and us. I have never, in my life, seen an Andrew Jackson Democrat who was not a firm and decided Union man. He was not a man to make hypothetical cases, and say that in such and such events, in case such and such things would be done, the Union would be dissolved. It is easy to make a man of straw and prostrate him. The honorable Senator from Georgia, however, says the people of Georgia would not even wait for overt acts. He thinks they would begin before it came to that. I think there was no danger to be apprehended from the anti-slavery agitation so long as it was confined to such people as those who originated it in the North—a lady or two, and a gentleman or two, here and there. They became objects of importance from the fact that the South, choosing to agitate the matter, came in conflict with them, and gave them prominence, and swelled them into something like a political party, and, after a while, they became imposing in their attitude. But, sir, there were more free-soilers made by the repeal of the Missouri compromise than had ever existed before on the face of the earth. By whom was that repeal brought about? Who produced it?

Sir, I am not afraid of disunion. I do not think there is any danger, though gentlemen may talk. There are a great many very gaseous gentlemen in the South who have a great deal of time to play the demagogue, and to become important street corner politicians, to talk about it; but there are thousands of men at home at their work, who know nothing and care nothing about what is said in such places and by such persons. These men contrive either to be sent to public assemblies on occasions that can give expression to their opinions, or they send themselves voluntarily, and they assume to represent what is considered an important class in the community. But, sir, they are not going to bring about disunion. An attempt was made in a portion of the southern country to start a great southern league, to prepare the public mind for forcing the southern States into a revolution at any time that might be thought proper; but that league was an abortion; it failed; it may have had one small branch, but it tapered down to the mere point of nothing. That was said to be a great effort. From the fuss it made throughout the South, you would have thought it embodied some great principle; that the South were in imminent danger of destruction, but it happened that the South got along very well, and the southern league died. That is the way these leagues will go whenever they start, and are brought to the attention of the people. When the people reflect, they will be fully satisfied that it is not a league for the benefit either of them or of their posterity.

I cannot for a moment believe that the wisdom of the nation will ever, so long as time lasts, abandon the road of security and safety to it, or that it will ever forget the wise teachings of the fathers. What do you think of the great political leader who will boldly assert that the boys, nowadays, have more wisdom than the framers of the Constitution and the fathers of the Revolution had? Such a sentiment has been enunciated by the author of the southern league; but how much regard is to be paid to his sanity, or how much respect to his patriotism or his opinions? Sir, what shall be thought when a man profanely derides the memory of our glorious ancestors who established this Union, and consecrated it by their wisdom and by their loyalty and by their devotion to human happiness, and who had the prospective glory of a nation of freemen before them. The idea that an

American tongue should be wagged to detract from their high renown and manifest wisdom is sacrilege.

The honorable gentleman supposes that I meant to make a martyr of him, and that I imputed to him treason, and wanted to crucify him. Sir, I never thought of such a thing. I meant to make no application of my remarks on that point to him; but I wanted to impress him with my personal kindness of feeling, and to show that I had no hostility. I did not wish to evince, either in tone, in language, or in sentiment, any personal hostility to him. It was his opinions that I combated; not his personal amiable qualities, nor his blandness, nor his personal attractions or embellishments; but I wished to attack what I thought was the heresy of his positions; not to impugn his honor, his truth, or his candor. I could not do that, for he is exceedingly candid. [Laughter.] It is really strange that he should suppose that I would crucify him. I have no doubt he thinks he is right; but I would rather that he should live for a thousand years, that he should live until experience shall correct what I think are his errors; but I would not cut short his life a single moment, or send him to his long account with the sin of any predilection he might have for disunion upon his head. I would not think of it, Mr. President. [Laughter.] I am sure there is no single quality that I more admire than forbearance; and though that gentleman has thought proper to say that I charged him with treason, I beg leave to say that he was not in my mind's eye at the particular moment that I used the expression in regard to treason. I was referring then to a crisis over which busy memory was employed, thinking of the scenes that had passed between that moment and the moment I was addressing the Senate; what vast changes had taken place; a new world of associates, and all things contrasted with that day, wonderful to contemplate. I never once thought of inflicting crucifixion upon the gentleman, nor did I think of charging him with treason, though I believe the sentiments he has enunciated might bear that construction, if we were to come down to the Constitution and its intent and spirit. He says it is treason to the South to do so and so. Well, sir, the honorable gentleman is not unconcious of his importance. I am satisfied that he is fully impressed with the exalted position which he occupies, and I cannot say that I ever wish that he shall not be renewed in his position here; but if he shall not be, I promise him a hospitable reception at Cedar Point, where we can talk over the present, talk over the past, and enjoy the fish of the bay and the game of the forest.

Mr. President, I tell you that the honorable Senator is not altogether without some aspirations; he feels that he is not only capable of great things, but that they might be thrust upon him, for he says:

"I am free to declare, that if I had the control of the southern people"—

Well, now, that shows that there is good material there out of which to make a Governor, and if he had never thought about the control of them he would not, in the heat of debate, suggest it here. There is something deliberate and calculating in this:

"I am free to declare here, that if I had the control of the southern people, I would demand this of Congress"—

He thinks that the South should have everything. He does not define exactly what it is, but she should have an equal share of everything, without specifying any particular thing—as I now hope she has; and he says:

"I would demand this of Congress at the organization of every territorial government, as the terms upon which the South should remain in the Union. I would hold our 'right' in one hand and 'separation' in the other, and leave the North to choose between them. If you would do us justice, I would live with you in peace; if you denied us justice, I would not live with you another day."

Now, sir, I want to know when the North has denied us justice? and I want to know whether words spoken are to be taken for acts done? Is it to be a cause of quarrel between the North and South that a number of intemperate individuals at the North express ultra notions, about which the masses in the North do not agree themselves? Is the language of such individuals to be set down to the charge of the North as meriting the reprobation and condemnation of the whole community? and are they, for that reason, to be declared aliens, and to be ostracised? Can we control the expressions of persons in the North? There is no constitutional prohibition, that I know of, against the expression of opinion; every man has a right to express his opinions in this country; and, much as I may be at variance with gentlemen in regard to their views, I do not consider the expression of them an act of treason to the South. The South very freely exercises the same privilege; and if the North had the same disposition which is evinced by some portions of the South, they could with good reason complain of the constant talk of dissolution, and use that as a pretext for sloping off themselves. I do not believe that the expression of opinions is a violation of the Constitution; I do not think it is sufficient ground to keep up an eternal quarrel. An overt act of encroachment on our rights would place us in a different position. I can see no use in presenting hypothetical cases continually, and saying that if such and such things were done that never have been contemplated or thought of, they would be good ground for separation. When those things occur, it will be time enough to examine the point; we shall be as well prepared then as we are now; but to make preparation for an event that is not at all probable may be the means of precipitating us into difficulties from which nothing would ever extricate us. When an act is done, there may be something in it; but gentlemen may express themselves as they please.

I was censured, and it was brought up as a cause of challenge against me in a canvass through which I passed, that I had said that if John C. Fremont, or any other citizen under the Constitution of the Union, were elected President, I would not deem it cause for going into revolution or division. That was the sentiment I declared, and it was brought up in judgment against me. I repeat the sentiment—I would judge the tree by its fruit. The American people have the right to select any citizen who is qualified under the Constitution for President of the United States; and whilst he discharges his duties under the Constitution, I would render him allegiance as faithfully as if he had been the man of my own choice, however adverse he might be to me. So long as he discharged his duties by executing the laws of the country and supporting the Constitution, I would sustain him.

The gentleman feels ground of felicitation in the fact that I was beaten: he rejoices at that result. I can join him in that feeling, and say to him, that if he should happen to be beaten in Georgia, we can talk over both events in Texas in perfect tranquility; and I am sure he will learn from me to be reconciled, and feel pleasant under the infliction. But, considering the humility of my condition, as the gentleman represented it, his attack really suggested to me the fable of the dead lion. Another animal

passing by, regarding his lifeless condition, took the liberty of planting its heels in his face, and exulted in the infliction which it made. It was of that *peculiar* class of animals from which Sampson took a jaw bone to slay the Phillistines. [Explosive amusement in the galleries and on the floor of the Senate Chamber.]

Mr. IVERSON. Mr. President, I heartly rejoice that the Senator from Texas, in the generous moderation which he has exhibited upon the present occasion, has said nothing to which I feel called upon to make any reply. That Senator's relations and mine of a personal character as, he knows well, have been long friendly and cordial; and I regret, perhaps more than he, that anything should have occurred to mar the kind feelings which have subsisted between us. But, sir, when yesterday the Senator thought proper to indulge in language which I considered exceedingly ungenerous and harsh towards sentiments which I had uttered on this floor, I could but feel that I was called upon to repel the charges he made, and to carry the war even into Africa; but the kind personal feelings which the Senator has exhibited towards me to-day, together with the very exalted compliments he has thought proper to pay me, have disarmed me and suppressed even the temporary feelings into which I was betrayed yesterday after the speech of the Senator. I rejoice that I have it in my power, on the present occasion, to express my regrets that I should yesterday, by what I considered a harsh attack made on my sentiments and myself, personally, have been betrayed into any language which was calculated to wound the sensibility of the Senator from Texas.